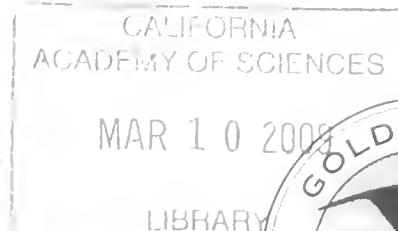


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VOL. 94 NO. 2 MARCH 2009

# E GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY



Tom Grey

The Western Burrowing Owl population in California is in steep decline.

## Protecting Burrowing Owls at Cesar Chavez Park

For the past three months, visitors to the Berkeley waterfront have seen bright orange plastic fencing stretched 540 feet along a pathway on the northeastern side of Cesar Chavez Park. Savvy Golden Gate Audubon members and other birders know the fencing is there to protect Western Burrowing Owls who spend up to five winter months on the rocky shoreline. Every year, these small birds migrate hundreds of miles from Canada or the northwest U.S. and, remarkably, a few find their way to food and shelter in abandoned California Ground Squirrel burrows on the park's shoreline. While birders may realize why the fence is there, few people know how it got there.

For the past few years, when the burrowing owls arrived at Cesar Chavez Park in November, GGA volunteer Della Dash noticed how vulnerable they were to off-leash dogs, bicyclists, and people unintentionally getting too close and disturbing them. "The birds live in abandoned ground squirrel burrows or rocky outcroppings right next to the walkway," Della says. "They're exposed to everyone who passes by. Last year, six owls arrived and only five departed, as one was killed by a dog. This year, only four owls arrived. In order for them to breed again, they must survive the winter." She pointed out that according to the latest census data by the Institute for Bird Populations, nesting and over-wintering populations of Western Burrowing Owls in

BURROWING OWLS continued on page 12

## Endangered Terns in Danger Again

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs publicly presented its plans last December to develop a medical complex and cemetery on the tarmac of the former Alameda Naval Air Station that is occupied by a thriving colony of endangered California Least Terns. In its presentation aboard the U.S.S. Hornet, the V.A. pitched its plan as a "one-stop-shop" to serve Bay Area veterans and their families. If successful, the complex would occupy land previously designated by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service as the minimum habitat necessary to keep the Alameda Least Tern colony viable.

The V.A. has not yet released its environmental review documents and claims that it is continuing to assess its alternatives. Yet at the presentation, the V.A. clearly expressed its intention to take ownership of over 500 acres of land at the former Air Station from the U.S. Navy and to construct a columbaria for cremated veterans, an outpatient clinic, a privately operated community hospital, administrative and medical offices, and a 25-acre helipad.

Golden Gate Audubon supports the intention of the V.A. to provide better care to Bay Area veterans, but joins many environmental and civic groups with concerns about the proposed project. At the presentation in December, several speakers reminded the V.A. that the project will have unavoidable impacts on the Least

TERNS continued on page 2



INSIDE

- 3 Earth Hour/Lights Out
- 4-5 CBC Results
- 9 Bird Advocate

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Supporting Membership is \$25 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The board of directors meets six times per year (schedule can be obtained from the main office).

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Nature Store hours: Monday – Friday, 9 – 12, 1 – 5

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### TERNS from cover

Terns, California brown pelicans, and other local wildlife. Speakers also expressed concern about increased traffic in Alameda, a lack of public transportation to the site, and costs to the local community.

The V.A.'s plan also appears to ignore a 1999 Biological Opinion issued by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service that found that development in the area would have unavoidable and significant impacts on the viability of the colony. The 1999 Biological Opinion forbade the construction of buildings, lights, or parking structures near the colony. The V.A. did not address how its project could proceed given the restrictions of the 1999 Biological Opinion.

The unique features of the tarmac at the former Air Station make it ideal for nesting California Least Terns and for management of the colony by the Fish & Wildlife Service. The flat, largely unvegetated runways around the colony site reduce the number of predators and other disturbances to the colony, and the fertile Bay waters adjacent to the land provide necessary foraging grounds for the nesting terns. Because of these qualities, the Alameda colony is highly productive and has become essential to the preservation of the species in California.

In cooperation with the San Francisco Bay chapter of the Sierra Club, Arc Ecology, and Citizens to Complete the Refuge, Golden Gate Audubon issued a lengthy letter to the V.A. and Navy on January 20th commenting on the proposed project. The comment letter cited several of the scientific studies and reports produced about the tern colony at the former Naval Air Station and strongly urged the V.A. to consider developing its project in another place that would better serve veterans and their families without harming the California Least Terns in Alameda.

When the V.A. releases its final environmental documents later this year, Golden Gate Audubon will work with its partners and counsel to review them and ensure that the California Least Terns are afforded every protection required by law. Meanwhile, the California Least Terns will soon return to Alameda and, we hope, have another successful breeding season. The V.A.'s December 18th presentation is publicly available at [www.bracpmo.navy.mil/announcements.aspx#26](http://www.bracpmo.navy.mil/announcements.aspx#26). Please feel free to contact me at [mlynes@goldengateaudubon.org](mailto:mlynes@goldengateaudubon.org) or 510.843.6551 for more information.

—Mike Lynes, Conservation Director

## Member Nominations to the Board of Directors

Golden Gate Audubon will have four slots open for elected members of the board of directors, with terms beginning on July 01, 2009. Member petitions for nominations must be submitted to the GGA office by March 20, 2009, for the board election to be held on June 29, 2009. Petitions must be signed by a minimum of 100 (maximum of 500) members in good standing, and must include a written agreement by the nominated candidate to serve.

Names of candidates will be published in the May 2009 Gull, along with ballot forms for members to fill out and send in by June 19. If you wish to submit a petition, call Kevin E. Consey, GGA Chief Operating Officer, at 510.292.6274.



### Introducing Stephanie Strait

Golden Gate Audubon welcomes Stephanie Strait as its new office manager. With an MFA in film from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, she has worked as an administrator in many non-profits in the arts and education. She served most recently as the Director of Education at the Richmond Art Museum and the part-time Assistant Director of HELP the Animals (both in Indiana).



# CONSERVATION CORNER

## EARTH HOUR AND LIGHTS OUT FOR BIRDS

Earth Hour began in 2007 in Sydney, Australia as a campaign to get residents to turn their lights off, and has grown to become one of the world's biggest climate change initiatives. The goal is to reach one billion people in more than 1,000 cities to join together to show that it is possible to take action on global warming. At 8:30 p.m. on March 28, people around the world will turn their lights off for one hour. Landmarks including the Golden Gate Bridge, Rome's Coliseum, and New York City's Times Square billboard will go dark, as actions we can take against global warming.

Golden Gate Audubon has participated in Earth Hour previously and is working to expand the concept to benefit birds. GGA is encouraging the building owners, managers, and tenants of the 44 tallest buildings in San Francisco to kick off our Lights Out for Birds program on March 28 during Earth Hour. In Lights Out we will encourage building owners, managers, and tenants to turn off unnecessary lights and pull blinds or drapes from sunset to sunrise during each migration period.

Please join us on March 28 by turning off your lights from 8:30-9:30 p.m. as part of Earth Hour and Lights Out for Birds. Contact Noreen Weeden [nwweden@comcast.net](mailto:nwweden@comcast.net) to volunteer to provide information on Lights Out for Birds to building owners, managers, and tenants, or help us monitor for bird-building collisions downtown this spring or participate in other Lights Out for Birds activities.

—Noreen Weeden

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AND EVENTS

### Lights Out Bird Census

GGA volunteers will conduct early-morning censuses in downtown San Francisco during the spring migration (February 15 – May 15) to collect birds that may have collided with buildings during the night. This is an opportunity for bird enthusiasts

of all skill levels to participate in citizen science and to help implement this important new program for GGA, the first of its kind on the West Coast. Millions of birds are injured or killed as a result of collisions with tall, lit structures at night. With the information gathered during these censuses, Golden Gate Audubon will work with the City of San Francisco, PG&E and other partners to encourage reduced night-lighting of tall structures in the City, potentially saving thousands of birds each year, while conserving energy, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and saving building operators money.

### Saturday, March 7, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Pier 94 wetlands restoration workday. As part of our on-going efforts to restore wetlands along San Francisco's southern waterfront, we'll continue our work weeding the beach and upland areas. Eddie Bartley leads a bird walk from 1-2 p.m. Please join us—refreshments provided.

### Sunday, March 8, 9 a.m. to noon

Join our TogetherGreen Volunteer Days with the Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge workday. Help us prepare habitat for California Least Terns. Meet at the main refuge gate at the northwest corner of former Alameda Naval Air Station, Alameda.

### Saturday, March 21, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Martin Luther King Jr. Shoreline. Celebrate MLK Jr. Day with the East Bay Regional Park District and other Bay Area groups to remove invasive plants and trash. Enter the park from Swan Way and follow the road to the end parking lot. Then look for the wooden observation platform that is adjacent to Arrowhead Marsh.

### Saturday, March 28, 9 a.m. to noon

Save the Quail habitat restoration workday at Harding Park. Meet at the parking lot at the corner of Sunset Blvd. and Lake Merced Blvd.

For more information on any of these activities or events, or for directions to any of the sites, please contact Jennifer Robinson, Golden Gate Audubon's Volunteer Coordinator, at [jrobinson@goldengate-audubon.org](mailto:jrobinson@goldengate-audubon.org).

## East Bay Conservation Committee

Join the Conservation Committee on your side of the Bay to find out about our local projects. The East Bay Conservation Committee meets on the first Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. at a restaurant in downtown Berkeley. For more information contact Phil Price at [pnpprice@creekeats.com](mailto:pnpprice@creekeats.com). The San Francisco Conservation Committee meets the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Randall Museum.

## Hosts Needed for Audubon Canyon Ranch

Want a chance to enjoy a beautiful nature and birding site while helping others? Join the GGA team of Audubon Canyon Ranch (ACR) hosts this



Snowy Egret

spring. Each year, from mid-March to mid-July, thousands of visitors come to see herons and egrets nesting in the redwood trees at the ACR Bolinas Lagoon Preserve, overlooking Bolinas Lagoon in western Marin County. Hosts greet and direct visitors and answer questions. All of the information hosts need is provided in advance.

Golden Gate Audubon, which helped establish Audubon Canyon Ranch, is responsible for providing volunteer hosts on the following dates: March 21 and 22; April 18 and 19; May 9, May 10 (Mother's Day), May 30, and May 31; June 13, and June 14. Hosts arrive by 9 to 9:15 a.m. and work until about 4:30 p.m., with a lunch break. For more information and to sign up, please contact Anna-Marie Bratton at [annamariebb@earthlink.net](mailto:annamariebb@earthlink.net).

# San Francisco's 26th Christmas Bird Count

The 2008 San Francisco Christmas Bird Count was held on Tuesday, December 30. The weather was clear, with intermittent dense fog. One hundred and sixteen birders covered 16 land areas between the Presidio of San Francisco and the north end of the San Francisco peninsula watershed. We had 6 backyard birders. We found 172 species and 50,416 individual birds. Our species count was within the range we consider normal for the north peninsula, but our total number of birds was low.

Sanderling remains a species of some concern with only 192 individuals this year. That number is up from our historic low of 111—last year—when they probably were impacted by the oil spill. Surf Scoter and White-winged Scoter are at historic lows.

Ruddy Turnstone, Surfbird, California Quail, Wrentit, and Spotted Towhee continue to appear on the brink of extirpation in San Francisco. Most of the California Quail, Wrentits, and Spotted Towhees reported on the count were sighted in San Mateo County.

Corvids always seem to be of interest to birders and to the general public. Our Raven count continues to explode, with yet another new record of 696 this year. In 2007 we set a record with 564 Ravens. Crows were up to a new record count of 360. Steller's Jay numbers jumped to a record 60. Until recently this species was considered a rare bird in San Francisco.

The excitement of finding rare birds was shared by many count groups. Our list included Eurasian Wigeon, Redhead, Harlequin Duck, Glaucous Gull, White-throated Swift, Yellow-billed Magpie, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, White-breasted Nuthatch, Rock Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Yellow Warbler, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Western Tanager, and Yellow-headed Blackbird. New to the count was a Worm-eating Warbler in Ferry Park in downtown San Francisco.

We did encounter two problems. First was that our count team was refused access to the Sharps Park Golf Course for the first time in the 26-year history of the count. That meant we were unable to survey birds in the wetland in that park. The



Mark Rauzon

A Worm-eating Warbler showed up for the count in Ferry Park.

other problem is that we did not receive documentation for one species, so we had to drop it from the count. We have lost species from time to time because of poor documentation, but never before because we didn't receive any documentation at all. We hope this points out the necessity of documenting rare birds for this and all other Christmas Bird Counts.

You can find the totals for this and all Christmas Bird Counts for 2007-08 and

all the historical data as well by checking the National Audubon Society web site: [www.audubon.org/bird/cbc](http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc). Follow the links to Current Year's Results or to Historical Results.

The 116 birders we had in the field were a record for our count. As always we would like to encourage birders with backyard feeders or habitats to join our count. A yard count can be done in as little as 15 to 30 minutes. Register as a yard counter now. You can do so by sending an e-mail to [sfbirdcount@yahoo.com](mailto:sfbirdcount@yahoo.com). Please title it "Yard Counter." We will not respond to your message until December, but we will send you information at that time. Other inquiries about the count can be sent to that e-mail address as well, but we will not open any messages until we are preparing for the 2009 CBC.

Mark your calendar for the 2009 San Francisco Christmas Bird Count. This weekday count will be held on Tuesday, December 29.

—Dan Murphy and Alan Hopkins

## Celebrating a Big, Birdy Year

On January 13 at Berkeley's Northbrae Community Church, Bob Power and Denise Wight regaled about 80 local birders with stories of great success and heartbreak failure, as Alameda and Contra Costa County Big Year birders celebrated the end of their year-long effort. Two hundred and ninety-five species of birds were seen in Alameda County in 2008: Bob Dunn was the most successful county birder, with 267 species. He was awarded a Dave Quady photograph of the county's best bird of the year, a Yellow Rail, seen at MLK Shoreline. His effort represents the record for a Big Year in Alameda County. Close behind Bob was Kathy Robertson, with 264 species, followed by Bob Power with 260.

In Contra Costa County, 268 species were seen during the year: Denise Wight was the leading birder with 247 species. She was awarded a Bob Lewis photograph of the county's best bird of the year, a Dusky Warbler first found by Emilie Strauss behind the Richmond Costco. In second place was Bob Dunn, birding both counties, with 232, followed by Jeff Hoppes, with 213 species. Denise's effort is a record for a Contra Costa Big Year.

The Big Year effort brought county birders together in the field, unearthed new birding spots, increased interest in birding in the area, and overall, was a lot of fun for the participants, who are now all taking a well-earned rest.



Dave Quady

Yellow Rail seen at MLK Shoreline.

# Oakland's 68th Christmas Bird Count

The night before the count, more than a few participants in Oakland's 68th annual CBC probably suffered nightmares: wind, cold, and rain were forecast, foretelling an uncomfortable day afield. But on Sunday, December 14, a bright moon and calm air greeted pre-dawn owlers. So how bad could the day be, anyway?

Well, it was a very good day. Undeterred by chilly breezes and numerous showers during the day, 189 field observers scoured Oakland's 15-mile diameter count circle on foot and on bicycles, and in cars, boats, canoes, and golf carts to identify and count every bird they encountered. Another 17 folks birded their yards, finding many common species as well as a very uncommon one: a Black-headed Grosbeak at a feeder in Berkeley. At dusk, 80 happy birders gathered at the count dinner to enjoy *A Tasteful Affair's* fine food, and to outdo one another with tales of their day's exploits.

More than 200 participants tallied 82,252 individual birds, the second-lowest number found since 1974. This probably reflects both a long-term decline in numbers, and year-to-year variation. A simple long-term gauge is how often we exceeded 100,000 birds: five times in the most recent ten-year period, seven times prior to that, and nine times in the period prior to that. In the short term, balmy weather in preceding weeks may have held migratory birds farther north, or showers on count day may have hampered detection. Total waterfowl numbers, for example, were down 4,000 from the year before, and small sandpiper numbers were down 6,000.

On count day we found 174 species, three fewer than our recent average. Best bird was a Townsend's Solitaire. At the north Tilden Park stakeout area, birders breathed a sigh of relief when the solitaire finally reappeared mid-afternoon. Last winter's birds making another appearance included a Palm Warbler in Oakland's Estuary Park, and the "beautiful duck," on Lake Merritt. This presumed male Hooded Merganser x Barrow's Goldeneye hybrid acquired its moniker on the 2005 count. A Yellow Warbler near the Oakland Airport was only the second detected since 1974. Two Snowy Plovers in Alameda marked the species' fifth appearance since 1991; it was regular in the 1970s and 1980s. A flock of Surfbirds at the Albany Bulb continued a recent pattern: detected about every other year since 1998 but not earlier.

Other unusual species included Snow Goose (two on Treasure Island), Long-tailed Duck (one each from the South Boat and North Boat), Tree Swallow (a flock at Lafayette Reservoir), and Nashville Warbler (near Pt. Isabel). Shoreline birders found record high numbers of Clapper Rail, Virginia Rail, and Sora, thanks to the unusually high mid-day tide, 7.0 ft. at the Golden Gate.

During count week—the period three days on either side of count day—birders found three of our four regularly occurring species



Dave Quady

A Townsend's Solitaire, found in Tilden Park on December 7, lingered through count day. The Oakland count's only previous record was one bird in 1964.

missed on count day: Redhead, Bald Eagle, and Barn Owl. The fourth, Ruddy Turnstone, having been missed on five consecutive count days, will relinquish the adjective "regular." A Red-necked Grebe offshore the Bay Bridge Toll Plaza and two Blue-gray Gnatcatchers in Tilden Park were unexpected and uncommon count week birds.

It was a pleasure to see so many youngsters on this year's count. At the exit end of the youngster range—he's about to turn 18, and "graduate"—was Oliver James, working his sixth count. At the entry-level end, three pre-teenage boys on their first count birded all day (two of them also enjoyed the count dinner), and three other pre-teenagers birded their neighborhood for a few hours. Science teacher John Poole's Chickadee Club participated for the twelfth year. With GGAS volunteer Anne McTavish helping John, 20 children from Berkeley's John Muir and Malcolm X

elementary schools birded all morning in Tilden Park. Let's try to attract more young birders to the next count!

Helping things run smoothly this year were Kristen Bunting and Jennifer Robinson in the GGAS office, and volunteers Noah Bennett, Elinor Blake, Della Dash, and Jeff Wilkinson at the dinner. We thank them all (and anyone inadvertently overlooked here). We especially thank the leaders of our 29 count areas, and the rest of the 206 CBC participants, who ensured a successful count.

We invite birders of any and every age to mark their calendar for the next Oakland count: Sunday, December 20, 2009. See you then!

—Dave Quady and Bob Lewis, co-compilers



Glen Tepke

This Long-tailed Duck, photographed near the Alameda Point Seaplane Lagoon, was one of two Long-tailed Ducks found within the count circle on count day.



# FIELD TRIPS

PAM BELCHAMBER, COORDINATOR

\$ Entrance fee  
Biking trip

For questions about individual field trips, contact the leaders. If you cannot reach a leader, contact Pam Belchamber at 510.549.2839. Field trips are also listed on the Golden Gate Audubon website at [www.goldengateaudubon.org](http://www.goldengateaudubon.org).

## San Francisco Botanical Gardens

Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

**Sunday, March 1, 8 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.**

Alan Ridley, [alanrid@pacbell.net](mailto:alanrid@pacbell.net); Helen McKenna, 415.566.3241; Ginny Marshall, 650.349.3780

Meet at 8 a.m. at the front gate of the Botanical Garden at Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way. This delightful section of Golden Gate Park has several micro-habitats that attract an array of resident, migrant, and vagrant birds. This regular monthly trip is oriented toward beginning birders.

## Jewel Lake in Tilden

Berkeley

**Friday, March 6, 8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.**

Phila Rogers, 510.848.9156,  
[philajane6@yahoo.com](mailto:philajane6@yahoo.com)

On the first Friday of the month the Jewel Lake walk will meet at the parking lot at the north end of Central Park Dr. for a one-mile, two-hour-plus stroll through this lush riparian area. We will see a variety of winter residents and on the lake, wintering waterfowl. We are likely to hear early spring singers. Be prepared for mud. Heavy rain cancels.

## Birding for Everyone

San Francisco Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum

**Saturday, March 7, 10 a.m. – noon**

Angie Geiger and Nancy DeStefanis, SF Nature Education, Darin Dawson, SF Botanical Garden Docent, 415.387.9160; [www.sfnature.org](http://www.sfnature.org)

Meet for this monthly trip at the kiosk/bookstore at front gate of Botanical Garden, Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way. Families welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Co-sponsored by Botanical Garden, San Francisco Nature Education, and Golden Gate Audubon Society.

## Heron's Head Park

San Francisco, near Pier 96

**Saturday, March 7, 10 a.m. – noon**

(Tours at 10 a.m., and every 30 minutes, last departure at 11:30 a.m.)

Nancy DeStefanis, Executive Director of San Francisco Nature Education.  
415.387.9160, [nancy@sfnature.org](mailto:nancy@sfnature.org)

Join Lowell High School interns, for a SF Nature Education and Golden Gate Audubon sponsored tour of this little-known site near Pier 94 at Hunter's Point in San Francisco. Heron's Head Park is located at Jennings and Cargo Streets, two blocks south of Pier 96. Rain cancels.

## Berkeley Fishing Pier

**Thursday, March 12, 8 a.m. – 10 a.m.**

Emilie Strauss, 510.540.8749

Meet at the Western Terminus of University Avenue in Berkeley for a leisurely half mile walk (one way) down the Berkeley fishing pier in search of Surf Scoters, scaup, grebes, and gulls. With luck we may see a Long-tailed Duck or Black Scoter. Dress warmly. Bring a scope if you have one. Rain cancels.

Directions: Take the University Avenue exit from Highway 80 and go west; at the "Y" keep to the left—you will still be on University Avenue—until it dead ends at the pier, and park. Lots of parking is available. We will meet at the beginning of the pier, which is also just south of Skates restaurant. An AC transit bus also services this area.

## Honey Lake and Greater Sage-Grouse

Lassen County

**Saturday and Sunday, March 14-15**

Dave Quady, 510.704.9353,  
[davequady@att.net](mailto:davequady@att.net)

We will search Lassen County for Greater Sage-Grouse, Bald Eagles, and other wintering birds of the Eastern Sierra. Trip is limited to the first 20 participants who sign up with the leader beginning at



Common Goldeneye

noon, January 26. Detailed directions will be provided to those who are confirmed on the trip. Lodging is available in Susanville; primitive camping is available in the Honey Lake State Wildlife Area. Plan to bring warm clothing, lunches for both days, and a scope if you have one. Carpooling encouraged.

## Presidio

San Francisco

**Sundays, March 15, and April 5 and 19; 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

Andrew Kleinhesselink, 415.517.1725

Meet at Crissy Field Center. Glimpse shorebirds and gulls on Crissy Field, then follow one of the last free-flowing creeks in San Francisco through new restoration sites in the Tennessee Hollow watershed, ending at the source of the water itself at El Polin Springs. Expect to walk around 2.5 to 3 miles. The adventure will focus on riparian habitat; we will hopefully see some early migrants such as Tree Swallows, Barn Swallows, and Allen's Hummingbirds. Space limited. RSVP required to 415.561.5418.

Directions to Crissy Field Center: [http://www.parksconservancy.org/our\\_work/crissy/visit.asp](http://www.parksconservancy.org/our_work/crissy/visit.asp). The MUNI 29 Bus comes to the Presidio Transit center: [www.presidio.gov/directions/transit](http://www.presidio.gov/directions/transit)

## Corona Heights

San Francisco

**Friday, March 20, 8 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.**

Charles Hibbard; Dominik Mosur; Brian Fitch; Margaret Goodale, [mgoodale@randallmuseum.org](mailto:mgoodale@randallmuseum.org), 415.554.9600 x16

Meet in front of Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, at end of Museum Way off Roosevelt. We will enjoy views of the city and bay as we circle Corona Heights, checking east canyon woodland and north forest for residents and migrants, as well as monitoring hilltop scrub and south cliff.

### Martin Luther King, Jr. Shoreline

Arrowhead Marsh, Oakland

Saturday, March 21, 9 a.m. – noon

Pamela Llewellyn, 510.316.8932,  
seacreature219@sbcglobal.net

Spend a Sunday morning at Arrowhead Marsh at the MLK Shoreline, noted for Clapper Rails and a number of other skulking species. We should see rails, raptors, and ducks.

Take Hwy 880 towards the Oakland Airport. Exit at Hegenberger Road, going West. Turn right on Doolittle, and right on Swan Way. Turn left into the MLK Shoreline Regional Park, and continue to the end of the road. Meet at the last parking lot at 9:30 a.m.

### San Francisco Bird Blitz

Saturday, March 21, 7 a.m. – dusk

Alan Hopkins, 415.664.0983, ash@sfo.com

Meet at Crissy Field Center, Mason St. at Halleck St., in Presidio. We will caravan to the city's best birding sites, including Golden Gate Park, Seal Rocks, Lake Merced, and McLaren Park, ending at Heron's Head Park in Hunters Point. This fast-paced trip usually yields more than 100 species. Afterward, we'll meet for dinner to tally the day's sightings. Bring lunch, snacks, and liquids. Carpooling is highly recommended.

### Berkeley Waterfront

March 22, 9 a.m. – noonish

Anne Hoff, anne2210b@sbcglobal.net,  
925.229.4908

Is it late winter or early spring? Well, both! We'll see the last of the winter visitors (ducks, shorebirds), the first of the spring passerines, and our year-round residents, including several raptor species. Major winter storm cancels. Park (or take the AC Transit #51) and meet in the last parking lot on the right before University Ave would roll onto the old Berkeley pier.

### Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

Dakota F.

Wednesday, March 25, 9:30 a.m. – noon

Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066,  
hilary@powersedit.com; Ruth Tobey,  
510.528.2093, ruthtobey@earthlink.net

Join us at the large spherical cage near the Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue. We will bird around there, then go up the garden path toward Children's Fairyland or walk down the lake toward Embarcadero, after which we will cover what we missed. Most of the winter migrants should still be with us, and the cormorant rookery in full swing. With luck, the egret rookery may be back in business. The Park may offer warblers, woodpeckers, and a few surprises. Take 12, N, or NL bus to Grand and Perkins, and walk into park on Perkins. Best parking at boathouse lot near spherical cage. Entry (via Bellevue near Children's Fairyland) is free on weekdays.

### Redwood Regional Park

Alameda

Saturday, March 28, 8 a.m. – noon

Rusty Scalf, rscalf@sonic.net

Join Rusty Scalf for a stroll through grasslands, chaparral covered slopes, thick riparian woodland, and creekside oaks in Redwood Regional Park. Rusty will be looking for wintering birds and some early spring arrivals. Dress for weather, bring a lunch, and a scope if you have one.

Take I-580 East to Redwood Road, turn left over the freeway, continue up Redwood Road 2-1/2 miles beyond Skyline Blvd. At park entrance turn left to road's end. Meet in parking lot, a parking fee of \$5 may be collected. \$

### Mines Road

Livermore

Saturday, April 18, 8 a.m. – early evening

Dave Quady, 510.704.9353,  
davequady@att.net

This trip will begin in Livermore at 8 a.m. and end there in the early evening, with opportunities to end earlier if you wish. We can expect to see Lewis's Woodpecker, Phainopepla, and Bullock's Oriole in this habitat; Wild Turkey, Greater Roadrunner, and Golden Eagle are among other possibilities. Bring food and liquids.

The trip is limited to the first 20 participants who sign up with the leader, beginning at noon on March 23. Carpooling is encouraged to/from Livermore, and essential during the day because of limited parking along our route. The leader will provide directions and carpooling information to those who are confirmed on the trip.

### Yosemite's Bird Life

Yosemite National Park

Friday-Sunday, May 29 – 31

Dave Quady, 510.704.9353,  
davequady@att.net

The lower and middle elevations of Yosemite National Park are alive with singing birds in late May/early June. A variety of habitats supports a rich diversity of bird life. This trip is limited to the first 20 participants who sign up with the leader; reservations open at noon on February 23. Past participants have found it convenient to camp at Hodgdon Meadow in the park (reservations necessary; campground fills up fast), or to stay in campgrounds or commercial lodgings near the park's Big Oak Flat entrance. Detailed information, including meeting times and locations as well as lodging suggestions, will be provided to those who are confirmed on the trip. Carpooling encouraged.

Confirmed participants should bring warm clothes, rainwear, and rubber boots for wet meadows. Bring lunches for Saturday and Sunday and be prepared to walk about three miles each day. Leaders: Dave Quady and Dave Cornman.

FIELD TRIPS continued on page 8



Juvenile Red-tailed Hawk



# SPEAKER SERIES

KAREN FREDERIKSEN, COORDINATOR

Talks in the Speaker Series begin at 7:30 p.m.

## Common Murre Breeding Ground Restoration

Berkeley: Thursday, March 19

Peter Kappes of the United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) will present his work with the Common Murre Restoration Project on the Central California coast. The project has been designed to reestablish a colony of Common Murres on a small sea stack called Devil's Slide Rock, located along the San Mateo coast near Pacifica. The breeding colony held close to 3,000 murres as recently as the early 1980s but was wiped out as a result of two quite separate occurrences. Tens of thousands of murres in central California were drowned in gill nets between the late 1970s and mid-1980s. In the winter of 1986, 26,000 gallons of oil were spilled along the California coast causing the death of 6,300 murres. The breeding colony on Devil's Slide Rock disappeared.

Peter will discuss the restoration project, which began in 1995 under the direction of USFWS's San Francisco Bay National Wildlife

Refuge in cooperation with Humboldt State University and the National Audubon Society. In addition to the work at Devil's Slide Rock, the Common Murre Restoration Project includes colony monitoring at the Point Reyes Headlands in Point Reyes National Seashore and the Castle and Hurricane Point Rocks in the California Coastal National Monument along the Big Sur coast.



Decoys meet murres at Devil's Slide.

USFWS

**Berkeley:** Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (between Solano and Marin). Directions: [www.northbrae.org/directions.htm](http://www.northbrae.org/directions.htm)

## Bicycle Trips

Kathy Jarrett, leader

510.547.1233 (call for cell number; no calls after 9 p.m.), [Kathy\\_Jarrett@yahoo.com](mailto:Kathy_Jarrett@yahoo.com)  
Bicycle helmet required. Bring lunch and liquids. Dress in layers. Rain cancels.

**BART schedules:** [www.transitinfo.org](http://www.transitinfo.org)

### Redwood Shores

San Mateo County

**Saturday, March 7, 9:15 a.m.**

Meet at 9:15 at trailhead at Oracle Parkway and Shoreway Rd in Belmont. This circuit of Redwood Shores is a flat 11-mile loop on the S.F. Bay Trail and other bike paths, mostly paved, some on bike lanes on city streets. High Tide 8:41 a.m.

All levels of birders and bicyclists welcome.

Directions by car: from Highway 101 in Belmont, exit at Ralston/Marine Parkway and go east toward the bay 0.4 miles, left at the first light east of the freeway (Oracle Parkway) and turn left at next intersection (stop sign) and then immediately into a parking area to meet at 9:15.

### Hayward Shoreline

Alameda County

**Saturday, March 21, 8 a.m. – afternoon**

Meet at 8 a.m. at San Leandro BART station following 7:55 arrival of train from Richmond; ride 2.5 miles to trailhead via

Williams St. (bike lanes) or meet at 8:30 a.m. at end of Monarch Bay Dr. adjacent to trailhead. This trip lasts into the afternoon.

We will go south on the S.F. Bay Trail from the San Leandro Marina to the Hayward Shoreline Regional Park, and the Hayward Shoreline Interpretive Center, making about a 20-mile round trip. High Tide 9:16 a.m. Shorebirds should be flushed in by the tide. Some parts of the trails are paved, and others easily negotiable.

All levels of birders and bicyclists welcome.

Directions by car: From 880 in San Leandro, take the Marina Blvd. exit (west) and in 1.4 mi turn left onto Monarch Bay Dr. Go to the end to the last parking lot at San Leandro Marina Park.

### American River Trail

**Sacramento to Folsom, Friday, April 3**

**Folsom to Sacramento, Saturday, April 4**

Advance reservations necessary.

**Maximum 12 participants.**

For the two-day trip, join us Friday April 3 for the train ride from Emeryville to Sacramento and the bicycle ride to Folsom. We will leave the Emeryville Amtrak station Friday, April 3, at 7:55 a.m. (Train #524). Arrival in Sacramento is at approx. 10 a.m., then we bicycle from Sacramento

to Folsom and stay overnight, and bicycle back to Sacramento and take the train home on Saturday April 4 (Train #743 at 3:35, or #745 at 4:40). You can also drive to Sacramento/Folsom and meet us there.

To join us for a one day trip on Saturday April 4, meet us at Iron Point Light Rail Station in Folsom at 8:30 a.m. For the drive from the East Bay to Folsom allow 2.5 hrs.

The 23-mile long American River Trail between Sacramento and Folsom is rich in bird life, and the trail is fairly flat. Many birds also can be seen from the train.

All levels of birders welcome. Recent riding experience is a must to ensure the stamina necessary for such a long ride. Details will be sent to participants.

### Big Break and Marsh Creek

Oakley-Eastern Contra Costa County

**Saturday, April 11**

Meet at Fetzer Lane and Jordan Lane in Oakley at 9 a.m. Each year, nearly half of the waterfowl and shorebirds migrating along the Pacific Flyway pass through the Delta. A paved trail has views of freshwater marsh and is an excellent place to see many species of birds.

All levels of birders and bicyclists welcome. Rain cancels. Trail maps online at the EBRPD website. If you have room in your vehicle for an extra bicycle or

**BICYCLE TRIPS** continued on page 12

# Bird Advocate: GGA's New Conservation Director

**B**ay Area birds have a strong new voice speaking on their behalf, in the form of Michael Lynes, GGA's new Conservation Director. Lynes comes to GGA after working as a biologist for PRBO Conservation Science, followed by a career as an environmental and public interest attorney. "We were delighted to find Mike for this important position," says Elizabeth Murdock, GGA's recently retired Executive Director. "He brings a tremendous background, and we're excited to have him in this leadership role."

After graduating from UC Davis with a degree in biology and studying acorn woodpeckers with Walt Koenig at the UC Hastings Preserve, Lynes interned with PRBO as a field biologist at the Cosumnes River Preserve working on birds and riparian habitat. "We conducted a full range of monitoring techniques, including point counts, mist-netting, and nest searching; we wanted to record all of the species there and evaluate their ability to breed successfully in the remnant riparian habitat and restored areas," says Lynes. "Birds are an excellent indicator of habitat health."

Lynes also studied Rufous-crowned Sparrows in San Diego, doing nest searches and point counts in fragmented coastal scrub. "Developers had just learned how to dig into the steep slopes that contained the last remnants of coastal scrub around San



Diego," says Lynes. "We found that the sparrows were getting hit pretty hard with the various predators like cats and rats that go along with increased urbanization." Lynes also helped PRBO conduct bird surveys across the state. "Our general goal was to emulate what Joseph Grinnell had done in the 1920s—go out and find birds wherever we could; we did a great survey up and down the Central Valley."

In 2000, he went back to school to get his law degree, hoping to put those skills to work for birds and the environment. During his first summer, he worked for the U.S. Department of Justice assisting with the prosecution of environmental crimes, and then did a nine-month legal internship with Baykeeper. After graduation, he accepted a

position with a small Bay Area firm representing nonprofit groups in environmental enforcement actions. While he found the work satisfying, Lynes was anxious to return to working on avian and habitat conservation. His new position at GGA, he says, "is what I've always wanted to do." Adds Lynes "When I was a biologist at PRBO, even getting up at God-awful hours to chase birds around, there was a moment at least once every year where I was in awe that anybody would pay me to [monitor birds]. I'm looking forward to getting out and seeing birds again as part of my daily job."

Lynes' former co-workers sing his praises and look forward to watching his career evolve at GGA. Says Leo O'Brien, legal director and later executive director while Mike was at Baykeeper, "I know firsthand how fantastic it is to have Mike on your team. He is an exceptional and talented advocate. His passion for conservation and environmental protection combine with his careful, strategic approach and strong work ethic to make a tremendous leader. The icing on the cake is that Mike is a fun and genuinely warm coworker." Says PRBO's Geoff Guepel, "It is very exciting to see an experienced field biologist who understands the needs of bird and their habitat requirements be an advocate for policy change."

—Lisa Owens Viani

## Quail Habitat Steward

When Jenny Sotelo moved to the Bay Area eight years ago, she found a great appreciation for natural spaces, gardening, and sustainability. While finishing her Associate's Degree at San Francisco City College, she volunteered at Alemany Farm. In August of 2007, she began working in the forestry sector of the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department. In January 2008, she transferred to Harding Park Golf Course to learn more about the maintenance of natural spaces, including large expanses of golfing greens. Interested in enhancing the site's garden corridors, she began researching which plants work best for both wildlife and the aesthetics of the golf course. After spending a day at the GGA California Quail restoration site, Jenny's interest in native plants blossomed. She immediately became involved maintaining the site during her breaks at work, watering, weeding, and pruning. Not only did she gain experience in the field, but she

also began taking classes at Merritt College in Landscape Horticulture. Jenny continues to fill her breaks looking after the site, and has joined our monthly workdays, including a recent one in which we planted 150 native shrubs.

—Jennifer Robinson



Jennifer Robinson



# CLASSES

Golden Gate Audubon is sponsoring the following 3 classes through the Albany Adult School, 601 San Gabriel Avenue, Albany. Register online at <http://albany.k12.ca.us/adult/> or call 510.559.6580 for more information.

## Birding By Ear—Spring 2009

Denise Wight [blkittiwake@yahoo.com](mailto:blkittiwake@yahoo.com)

Five Thursday evenings, April 2 – May 7 – 8:30 p.m.

Four Saturday field trips, April 4 – May 2, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

No class on Thursday, April 9th and no field trip on Saturday April 11.

Spring is here! Birds are in full song and it's the perfect time to learn some of our local spring songsters. We will listen to bird songs in class, and visit various habitats to get a full range of the types of birds songs we hear in the Bay Area. Please visit instructor's website [www.blkittiwake.com](http://www.blkittiwake.com) for field trip locations.

## Easter Weekend Birding Getaway

Anna Hatt [ann271@usb.globalsync.net](mailto:ann271@usb.globalsync.net)

Bob Lewis [Bob@wingbeats.org](mailto:Bob@wingbeats.org)

One Wednesday evening, April 1, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

One weekend field trip, April 11 – 12

A lecture on spring land and waterbirds, followed by a weekend away to Elkhorn Slough and Monterey to see shorebirds in breeding plumage, courting Brandt's Cormorants, spring passerines, and more. More details on [www.wingbeats.org](http://www.wingbeats.org).

## Birds and Butterflies: Easy Garden Enchantment

Corrine Greenberg, [www.thegardenisateacher.com](http://www.thegardenisateacher.com)

Four Tuesday evenings, April 14 – May 5, 7 – 9 p.m.

One Saturday field trip, May 2

Welcome birds, butterflies, and more. Learn year-round ecological gardening management to create a wildlife habitat. \$5 materials fee, payable to instructor.

The following class is co-sponsored by the Oakland Museum of California. To register, call GGAS at 510.843.2222.

## Shorebird Migration

Bob Lewis, [Bob@wingbeats.org](mailto:Bob@wingbeats.org)

Oakland Museum of California

Three Thursday evenings, April 2, 16, and 23, 9 – 8:30 p.m.

Three Sunday a.m. field trips, April 5, 19, and 26

\$70 fee

This class discusses migration and reproduction strategies of shorebirds, reviews worldwide shorebird taxonomy, and addresses the more difficult identification issues of our local shorebirds. More details at [www.wingbeats.org](http://www.wingbeats.org)

Please watch the April *Gull* and the GGA website for additional classes later in the Spring.

## Preparing for Future Wildlife Disasters

The San Francisco Foundation has awarded Golden Gate Audubon \$50,000 to create an emergency preparedness plan and establish protocols for mitigating future oil spills or other disasters affecting wildlife around San Francisco Bay. The Foundation's grant recognizes the tremendous volunteer effort GGA marshaled following the Cosco Busan oil spill in 2007 that dumped 58,000 gallons of crude oil in San Francisco Bay. In addition to responding to the emergency cleanup of oiled birds and Bay shoreline, GGA volunteers spent months analyzing the data collected by the emergency response teams.

According to GGA board member Noreen Weeden, who organized GGA's cleanup and analysis efforts, "Funding from the Foundation will expand our ability to quickly mobilize

our vast volunteer network in a coordinated and effective manner. The funds will enable us to develop an emergency plan to better guide our staff and volunteers in collecting vital information during a crisis and in determining habitat restoration to mitigate the effects of a toxic disaster." Weeden said the emergency plan will include guidelines on how to observe, evaluate, and assist in rescue of oiled birds and provide instructions for testing, evaluating, and updating information. "We are extremely fortunate to have received pro bono consulting services to help us develop the plan from Emergency Management and Safety Solutions, a consulting firm that provides expertise in emergency preparedness, planning, testing, and execution."

With San Francisco Foundation funds,

GGA also will prepare restoration project recommendations for the Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) team, comprised of eight California and U.S. government environmental agencies.

The emergency response plan, oil spill report, and NRDA recommendations are scheduled to be completed by the end of April 2009. In addition, as part of its ongoing efforts to prepare for any future wildlife disaster in the bay, GGA is hosting training sessions with WildRescue/the International Bird Rescue Research Center to instruct GGA volunteers in hands-on wildlife rescue. The first training, held in January, had 32 participants. GGA plans to hold more trainings in coming months that will be publicized in *The Gull* and on the GGA website.

—Marjorie Blackwell



# OBSERVATIONS

BRUCE MAST

DEC 1 – JAN 31, 2009

**D**ecember brought us CBCs and winter rarities; January saw cloudless blue skies and unseasonably warm temperatures.

## LOONS TO DUCKS

A Yellow-billed Loon (*Gavia adamsii*) joined 15-20 Red-necked Grebes on Tomales Bay at Miller Pt., MRN, on Jan. 25-30 (Dwi; mob). Offshore, a Short-tailed Albatross (*Phoebastria albatrus*) was spotted north of the Cordell Bank, MRN, on Dec. 29 (DeS). Sea watches from the SM coast tallied Short-tailed Shearwaters Dec. 12 and Jan. 1 (RT) and Black-vented Shearwaters Dec. 12 and 20 and Jan. 3 (RT, fide ADM).

## RAPTORS TO ALCIDS

On Dec. 6, a Zone-tailed Hawk was reported flying over Railroad and Grove Streets in Sonoma (RL). A Solitary Sandpiper foraged on the rain-soaked lawns at L. Cunningham, SCL, Jan. 5-8 (Dwe; mob). A Ruff remained at Limantour Beach, PRNS, MRN, through Dec. 20 (RSc; SH, mob).

On Dec. 29, a visiting British birder photographed an adult Black-tailed Gull (*Larus crassirostris*) at Pillar Pt. Harbor, SM (CG). While overall gull numbers were down at the Venice SB roost in Half Moon Bay (SM), the site nevertheless hosted a possible Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucopterus*) on Jan. 25 (RSt, DD) and a probable 1st-cycle Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*) on Dec. 31 (OJ; MBr, AR, AJ). Coastal CBCs logged Black-legged Kittiwakes on Dec. 20 and Jan. 4 (fide Dwi and VB). On the Pt. Reyes CBC, a Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia*) turned up at N. Beach, PRNS (fide Dwi). Ancient Murrelets were scattered along the coast with a high count of 14 at Bodega Head, SON, Jan. 4-11 (SC, LL, Cli).

## DOVES TO THRASHERS

North Bay CBCs reported Spotted Owls at Muir Woods, MRN (fide HK) and western SON (fide VB). The Southern MRN CBC reported a Barred Owl near Stinson Beach. Roosting Long-eared Owls were noted Dec. 18-19 at Buena Vista Park, SF (Ts; DM,



Bruce Mast

Northern Waterthrush at Denniston Creek, San Mateo County

ADM, oob) and Jan. 3 in Pescadero, SM (GH, ADM).

A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker chilled out on Hippy Hill in GGP, SF, Dec. 13-16 (AH; KP, JC). Another spent early Jan. in Schellville, SON (DoS; mob). Red-naped Sapsuckers were reported Jan. 4 and 6 on the Western SON County CBC (fide VB) and at Spring L. in Santa Rosa.

The Pt. Reyes CBC found a Hammond's Flycatcher along Bear Valley Rd. (RG, IS, JT, Stephanie) and an Eastern Phoebe near the Olema Post Office (RSt, oob). A 2nd Eastern Phoebe was found Dec. 22 at Giacomini restoration marsh in Inverness Park, MRN (RSt). The region's 3rd Eastern Phoebe laid over at L. Cunningham, SCL, Jan. 14-9 (JL, SL; mob). The Las Gallinas Northern Shrike remained in San Rafael, MRN, through Jan. 24 (MS; mob). Two more were reported Jan. 25 and 26 at Limantour Beach at PRNS, MRN (PE, MC) and north of Yountville Crossroad, NAP (Mbe).

Up to 20 Mountain Bluebirds continued along Patterson Pass Rd., ALA, through

Jan. 4 (BP, mob). A solo Mountain Bluebird was located Jan. 3 at Fort Funston, SF (Cli, LL; mob). A Townsend's Solitaire, found Dec. 7 at Jewel L. in Tilden Park, CC, stayed for the Oakland CBC (JH; mob). Additional Solitaires showed up on Dec. 15 at King Ranch, SOL (DoS) and on Jan. 3 along Johansen Rd., SM (DaS). The Año Nuevo CBC turned up a Brown Thrasher foraging on wax myrtle berries on POST's Cloverdale Ranch, SM (JS; mob).

## WOOD WARBLERS TO FINCHES

Starting Dec. 11, an obliging Worm-eating Warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorus*) overwintered in Ferry Park, SF, showing off its technique for foraging in dead leaf clumps (RB; mob). Other noteworthy warblers included a Tennessee, Chestnut-sided, and Prairie Warbler; 6 Palm and 3 Black-and-White Warblers; and 5 Northern Waterthrush.

A female Summer Tanager of the southwestern *cooperii* race stopped briefly at Inverness Park, MRN, on the Dec. 21 (RSt, oob). A Black-chinned Sparrow was described on Jan. 16 at Palo Alto Baylands Duck Pond, SCL (AC). Running Deer Ranch at L. Berryessa, NAP, hosted 3-7 Vesper Sparrows Dec. 10-30 (Mbe). A Harris's Sparrow spent the holidays in a Livermore backyard, ALA (DR; mob). Lapland Longspurs turned up Dec. 7 in Half Moon Bay, SM (RT). An Indigo Bunting visited Santa Rosa on Dec. 20 (BB). Finally, 4 Evening Grosbeaks wandered to Gazos Cr. Rd., SM, on Jan. 3 (JR, PM, GC).

### Birding Resources at www.birdbox.org

Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = many observers, "oob" = other observers. Information is compiled from BirdBox transcripts and regional listservs, the author apologizes for any errors or omissions.

**Abbreviations for Observers:** AC, Anne Creevy; ADM, Al DiMartini; AH, Alan Hopkins; AJ, Al Jaramillo; AR, Ayla Reith; BB, Betty Burridge; BD, Bill Doyle; BG, Brad Graham; BP, Bob Power; CG, Chris Gibbons; Cli, Cindy Lieurance; Clo, Calvin Lou; DD, Dru Devlin; DE, Daniel Edelstein; DM, Dominik Mosur; DR, Dennis Rashe; DaS, David Suddjian; DeS, Debi Shearwater; DoS, Doug Shaw; Dwe, David Weber; Dwi, David Wimpfheimer; EL, Eugenia Larson; GC, George Chrisman; GH, Garth Harwood; HH, Hugh Harvey; HK, Harrison Karr; IS, Ivan Samuels; JC, Josiah Clark; JH, Jeff Hopps; JL, Jim Liskovec; JR, Jennifer Rycenga; JS, Judy Spitler; JT, Jim Tietz; KH, Kevin Hintsa; KO, Kris Olson; KP, Kathy Parker; LL, Les Lieurance; Mbe, Murray Berner; MBr, Matt Brady; MC, Mimi Calter; MS, Michael Stevenson; MV, Manny Vara; OJ, Oscar Johnson; PD, Peter Dramer; PE, Phil Eager; PM, Peggy Macres; RB, Russ Bright; RG, Rebecca Green; RL, Rick Lebaudour; RSc, Rusty Scalf; RSt, Rich Stallcup; RT, Ron Thorn; SC, Suzanne Cogen; SH, Steve Hampton; SL, Sue Liskovec; TC, Terry Colborn; Ts, Trent Stanley; VB, Veronica Bowers

**Abbreviations for Counties and Others:** ALA, Alameda; CBC, Christmas Bird Count; CC, Contra Costa; CP, County Park; Cr., Creek; Cyn., Canyon; GGP, Golden Gate Park; L, Lake; MRN, Marin; Mt., Mount; N., North; NAP, Napa; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; OSP, Open Space Preserve; POST, Peninsula Open Space Trust; PRNS, Pt Reyes National Seashore; Pt., Point; Rd., Road; Res., Reservoir; RP, Regional Park; RS, Regional Shoreline; S., South; SB, State Beach; SCL, Santa Clara; SF, San Francisco; SFBBO, SF Bay Bird Observatory; SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; SR, State Reserve; WPCP, Water Pollution Control Plant

**BURROWING OWLS** from cover

California are on a steep decline, particularly in the East Bay. And the Western Burrowing Owl is listed by California Fish & Game as "a species of special concern."

Della brought her concerns to GGA'S East Bay Conservation Committee (EBCC), along with an idea of how to protect the owls. She had already researched how burrowing owls in other parts of the country are protected and had information from other Audubon offices as far away as Florida. She also organized field trips for interested GGA volunteers: one led with Brad Olson, Environmental Program Manager for East Bay Regional Park District, to tour the Albany Plateau burrowing owl mitigation site; and one to meet the biologist at Mountain View Shorcline Park to learn how over-wintering and nesting populations of Western Burrowing Owls are protected there.

Della proposed that GGA ask the city of Berkeley to install temporary fencing adjacent to the owls' burrows at Cesar Chavez Park for four to five winter months, and that GGA produce a brochure with information about the owls, why they need protection, and asking dog owners to keep their dogs on leash. The committee agreed to pursue her ideas. Della and I set up a meeting with Berkeley Waterfront Manager John Mann, who immediately grasped the situation and, to our surprise and delight, agreed not only to support

the fence, but also to provide the fencing material, if we installed it and if approved by the Berkeley Waterfront Commission. A week later, Della and Phil Price, GGA board member and EBCC chair, presented the proposal to the Waterfront Commission, which gave it a thumbs up.

Two days later, Della received a phone call from John Mann saying his work crew was installing the fence supports at 7 a.m. the next morning, and would she get GGA volunteers out there to put up the fence? Della sprang into action, put out a call for help, and, overnight produced 10 laminated signs to hang along the fence, stating "Temporary Fencing (Nov. – April), Sensitive Wildlife Habitat." Early the next morning, four groggy volunteers Della, her neighbor Mr. Shih, Phil Price bearing donuts, and I, showed up to install the fence. Three hours later, raising high-fives, we finished the job, as we watched two Burrowing Owls observing us from behind the fence.

A month later, brochures about Western Burrowing Owls at Cesar Chavez Park were written, produced, and ready to be distributed to visitors at the park. GGA volunteers are now often on site at the park, handing out brochures and pointing out the owls to visitors. The volunteers, the owls, and the fencing will be there until sometime in early April. The exact departure date is up to the owls.

—Marjorie Blackwell

BICYCLE TRIPS continued from page 8

if you need a ride, please contact us at the earliest opportunity. Driving: CA-24 E toward Walnut Creek, I-680 N, CA-242 N. Take Calif. Hwy 4 east toward Stockton/Pittsburg and do not take the Brentwood

By-Pass, but take the Hwy 4 exit toward Brentwood/Stockton (instead of taking Hwy 160 over the Antioch Bridge). Turn right (east) onto Highway 4/Main St, go 1.1 mi, turn left at Big Break Rd (where Hwy 4 turns to the right at a shopping mall), go 0.2 mi. and turn

right at Vintage Pkwy, go 0.8 mi then left at Walnut Meadows Dr, go 0.6 mi to end, then right at Fetzer Ln. Park on street near entrance to trail at Fetzer Ln & Jordan Ln, Oakley.

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